

I Claim:

- 1 1. In a device that alerts a user to an incoming message by activating an acoustic driver, a  
2 method for shunting the acoustic driver comprising the steps of:
  - 3 a) detecting the presence of a broadcast squelch signal by monitoring signals that  
4 arrive at the device from an emitter; and
  - 5 b) automatically shunting the acoustic driver in response to the detecting step free of  
6 any communication back to the emitter.
- 1 2. The method as in claim 1, wherein the squelch signal originates extrinsic to the device.
- 1 3. The method as in claim 1, including the additional step of activating a vibrator to alert the  
2 user of the incoming message while the squelch signal is being detected.
- 1 4. The method as in claim 1, wherein the device includes both the acoustic driver and a  
2 vibrator, the method including the additional steps of:
  - 3 accessing a memory and retrieving a user-set alert mode; and
  - 4 in response to an incoming message, activating a preselected one of the acoustic  
5 driver and the vibrator in accordance with the user-set alert mode retrieved from the  
6 memory.
- 1 5. The method as in claim 1, wherein the detecting step comprises comparing incoming  
2 signals to an expected signal pattern to detect the presence of a squelch signal.

- 1 6. The method as in claim 1, wherein the detecting step comprises processing incoming  
2 signals to extract, when present, an indicium of the presence of the squelch signal and  
3 thereby detect the presence of a squelch signal.
- 1 7. The method as in claim 1, including the additional step of shunting the acoustic driver for  
2 a period of time after the broadcast squelch signal is detected.
- 1 8. The method as in claim 7, wherein the step of shunting the acoustic driver continues for a  
2 period of time after the broadcast squelch signal is no longer present.
- 1 9. For use with a device which shunts an acoustic driver which is otherwise activated to  
2 alert a user to an incoming message, a broadcast system comprising:  
3 a) a generator which outputs a "squelch" signal having a frequency which, when  
4 detected at the device, shunts the acoustic driver;  
5 b) an amplifier connected to the generator output to amplify the squelch signal;  
6 c) an antenna; and  
7 d) a transmitter connected between the antenna and the amplifier,  
8 wherein the amplified signal is transmitted from the antenna so as to define a zone of  
9 influence within which any said device has its respective acoustic driver shunted.

- 1 10. The broadcast system as in claim 9, wherein the generator and the amplifier and the  
2 transmitter are housed together.
- 1 11. The broadcast system as in claim 10, wherein the antenna is freely positionable remote  
2 from the transmitter.
- 1 12. The broadcast system as in claim 9, wherein the output of the amplifier has a variable  
2 power level setting such that the zone of influence can be varied with changes in the  
3 variable power level setting.
- 1 13. An electronic device of the type which alerts a user to an incoming message by  
2 connecting an alert signal to a preselected one of first and second alert devices,  
3 comprising:  
4 a) a detector which monitors the incoming message to detect the presence of a  
5 squelch signal broadcast locally by an emitter and generates a control signal at its  
6 output when the squelch signal is detected;  
7 b) a switch, operatively connected to the output of the detector, to automatically  
8 direct the alert signal to a predetermined one of the first and second alert devices  
9 while the squelch signal is being detected,  
10 wherein the electronic device operates free of any communications back to the emitter.
- 1 14. The electronic device as in claim 10, wherein the device is a cellular telephone.

1 15. The electronic device as in claim 10, wherein the device is a pager.

1 16. The electronic device as in claim 10, wherein the device is a personal digital assistant.